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February 2019 progress update on long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserve

From: [Indigenous Services Canada](#)

News release

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March 7, 2019 — Ottawa, Traditional Algonquin Territory, ON — Indigenous Services Canada

The federal government remains steadfast and on track in its commitment to end all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserve by March 2021.

Today, the Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Indigenous Services, provided the department's monthly progress update and noted that two years remain in the government's commitment to end long-term drinking water advisories.

In February 2019, two long-term drinking water advisories were lifted, as well as three short-term drinking water advisories at risk of becoming long-term were lifted, from public systems on reserves. No long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserves were added.

Long-term drinking water advisories lifted in February 2019:

- North Spirit Lake, in Ontario, lifted a long-term drinking water advisory on February 27, 2019, following repairs and upgrades to the community's water treatment and distribution system. Also, North Spirit Lake received operational support from Keewaytinook Okimakanak Water and Wastewater Operations Hub. The advisory had been in effect since August 1, 2001.
- Northwest Angle No. 37, in Ontario, lifted the long-term drinking water advisory at Windigo Island on February 20, 2019, following upgrades to treatment technology. The advisory had been in effect since February 9, 2016. ISC and the First Nation continue to work in partnership to advance a long-term solution that will meet the safe drinking water needs of the community for the next 20 years.

Short-term drinking water advisories lifted before becoming long-term:

- Deer Lake First Nation, in Ontario, lifted a short-term drinking water advisory from the Deer Lake Public Water System on February 20, 2019, after a water main break was repaired. The advisory had been in effect since April 4, 2018. ISC funds the Keewaytinook Okimakanak Water and Wastewater Operations Hub, whose operational support to Deer Lake helped to lift the advisory
- Webequie First Nation, in Ontario, lifted a short-term advisory from the Webequie Public Water System on February 19, 2019, after repairs to the water mains were completed. The advisory had been in effect since October 24, 2018. ISC funds the Matawa Water and Wastewater Hub, whose operational support to Webequie helped to lift the advisory.
- Star Blanket Cree Nation, in Saskatchewan, lifted a short-term drinking water advisory from the Wa-Pii Moos-Toosis No. 83A system on February 7, 2019, following the installation of a new pipe. On May 15, 2018, the advisory was reduced in scope to apply to 10 houses and two public buildings. The initial advisory was set on April 19, 2018, and applied to the entire community of Wa-Pii Moos-Toosis.

Through Budget 2016, the Government of Canada committed \$1.8 billion over five years to improve water and wastewater infrastructure and set a goal of March 2021 to end all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserves.

With two years to go, real progress has been achieved. The number of long-term drinking water advisories affecting public systems on reserves has declined from 105 in November 2015, to 60 as of March 4, 2019.

Of the projects underway to address the remaining 60 long-term drinking water advisories:

- 31 are in the construction phase
- 21 are in the design phase
- 8 are in the feasibility stage to determine infrastructure needs

It's projected that at least 20 additional long-term drinking water advisories will be lifted by the end of 2019.

Across the country through Budget investments in water and wastewater infrastructure on reserve, 505 projects are either underway or have been completed:

- 394 projects for repairs, upgrades or new builds of water treatment plants and other water and wastewater infrastructure
- 51 feasibility studies to determine infrastructure needs for the long-term
- 60 supporting projects like water operator training to build capacity within First Nations communities

First Nations and the Government of Canada will continue this important work to lift the remaining long-term drinking water advisories on public systems, complete the water and wastewater projects underway now, and bridge the gap in essential infrastructure on reserves.

Quotes

"More progress was made in the last month with partners on our government's commitment to lifting all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserve by March 2021. I am confident that with the hundreds of projects underway and completed that we will be successful in this commitment in the next two years. Since 2015, the lifting of 80 long-term drinking water advisories demonstrates how dedicated funds over five years can support First Nations in their planning for the long-term and make the infrastructure investments needed to build lasting change. Canadians can continue following our progress at www.canada.ca/water-on-reserve."

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indigenous Services

Quick facts

- A drinking water advisory becomes long-term when it has been in place for over a year.
- The number of long-term drinking water advisories on public drinking water systems on reserves decreased from 105 in November 2015 to 60 as of February 27, 2019.
- In total, 80 long-term advisories have been lifted, 36 have been added, and one was deactivated.
- Working in collaboration with First Nations, the Government of Canada has committed to ending all long-term advisories on public systems on reserves by March 2021.

- Since November 2015, 118 short-term drinking water advisories (lasting between two and 12 months) were lifted before becoming long-term.
- Budget 2016 provided \$1.8 billion over five years toward water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Budget 2017 committed an additional \$49.1 million over three years towards improving access to safe drinking water.
- Budget 2018 provides an additional \$172.6 million over three years to help accelerate progress on lifting drinking water advisories and to ensure more infrastructure projects can be completed prior to 2021. Budget 2018 also provides support for repairs to high risk water systems, recruitment, training and retention initiatives, and the establishment of innovative First Nations-led service delivery models.
- Through the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, the Government of Canada is investing more than \$180 billion over 12 years in public transit projects, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation routes, and Canada's rural and northern communities.

Associated links

- [Ending long-term drinking water advisories](#)
- [Investing in First Nations community infrastructure](#)
- [Lifecycle of a First Nation community infrastructure project](#)
- [Archived: Budget 2016: A Better Future for Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Budget 2017 Highlights – Indigenous and Northern Investments](#)
- [Budget 2018 – Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Investing in Canada: Canada's Long-Term Infrastructure Plan](#)
- [Investing in Canada Plan Project Map](#)

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